

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



'22 NOV -3 P5:48

SENATE

S. No. 1464

RECEIVED BY

Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

**AN ACT
UPHOLDING AND PROMOTING CAMPUS JOURNALISM AND CAMPUS PRESS
FREEDOM, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7079,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND
PROMOTION OF CAMPUS JOURNALISM, PENALIZING VIOLATIONS
AGAINST CAMPUS PRESS FREEDOM, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the Philippines, freedom of the press is tantamount to the right to self-expression of every Filipino. This gave birth to Republic Act 7079, otherwise known as the "*Campus Journalism Act of 1991*". But long before the law has been passed, the Department of Education has already been conducting the National Schools Press Conference (NSPC), one of the highest academic competitions in the country which aims to test the communication skills of Filipino campus journalists. Based on records, the first NSPC was held in 1920.

With its focus on oral and written communication skills, coupled by the principles of truth, fairness and patriotism, campus journalism is an integral key in nation-building. The campus press is the concrete manifestation of the students' democratic rights and a tangible expression of press freedom in the campus. The campus press brought about some prominent and notable figures in Philippine politics, media, art, and literature who have, in one way or another, contributed significantly to their respective fields. The campus press instilled in many of them the higher for truth and social change that served as the first stirrings of their nationalist consciousness.

This proposed measure seeks to repeal RA 7079 and bring to fore a new Campus Journalism Act that promotes campus journalism and upholds campus press freedom. This bill seeks to protect student journalists and promote their welfare while pushing forward the interests of their fellow students and other various issues that concern them.

It is time for us to also build a nation of journalists to fully maximize the ability and ubiquity of our future leaders. In view of the foregoing, passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This act shall be known as the “*Campus Press Freedom*
2 *Act of 2022.*”

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is declared policy of the State to promote the
4 development and growth of campus journalism as a means of encouraging critical and
5 creative thinking and as a beacon of nationalism and democracy inside and outside
6 the nation’s campuses.

7 The State also firmly recognizes the historic role and contribution of the campus
8 press to press freedom in the country, in providing a free and adequate venue for the
9 discussion of student concerns, and in upholding social consciousness and defending
10 the interest and welfare of the Filipino people by tackling both national and sectoral
11 issues in its pages. The State realizes that the campus press, as part of the media, is
12 an important institution in society that promotes and protects this constitutionally-
13 afforded right of press freedom.

14 The State thus resolves to undertake various programs and projects aimed at
15 improving the journalistic skills of students concerned, promote responsible and free
16 journalism, reopen all closed student publications, establish student publications in

1 schools where there are none, and protect and uphold freedom of the press at the
2 campus level and the rights of campus journalists at all times.

3 *Sec. 3. Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following are hereby
4 defined:

5 (a) *School* – an institution for learning in the elementary, secondary or tertiary
6 levels composed of the studentry, administration, faculty and non-faculty
7 personnel;

8 (b) *Student* – any person enrolled in elementary, secondary, tertiary, graduate
9 and postgraduate levels, including those enrolled in vocational and technical
10 education;

11 (c) *Student Publication* – the issue of any printed and/or online material such
12 as, but not limited to, newspapers, wall news, literary folios, newsletters
13 and other similar forms, independently published by, and which meets the
14 needs and interests of the students;

15 (d) *Student journalist* – any bonafide student enrolled for the current semester
16 of term, who has passed or met the qualifications and standards of the
17 editorial board;

18 (e) *Editorial board* – shall be composed of student journalists who have qualified
19 in placement examinations and shall be primarily in-charge of setting the
20 tone of the paper, in accordance with the thrust of the publication. The
21 editorial board may include a publication adviser at the option of its
22 members;

23 (f) *Editorial policies* – a set of guidelines by which a student publication is
24 operated and managed, taking into account pertinent laws as well as the
25 school administration’s reasonable policies. The said guidelines, which shall
26 be created and determined by the editorial board, shall determine the
27 frequency of the publication, the manner of selecting articles and features
28 and other similar matters; and

29 (g) *Editor-in-Chief* – shall be the publication’s primary editor chosen through a
30 competitive but fair selection process. The process of selecting the editor-
31 in-chief shall be determined by the student body.

1 *Sec. 4. Student Publication* – All educational institutions on the elementary,
2 secondary and tertiary levels, public or private, shall be mandated to establish a
3 student publication. Every school has at least one (1) student publication, without
4 prejudice to other publications established within the campus. A student publication
5 shall be published by the student body through an editorial board and publication staff
6 composed of students selected through fair and competitive examinations.

7 All student publications whose operations ceased upon the directives of the
8 school administration shall be revived and allowed to operate again.

9 *Sec. 5. Operations* – The school administration shall provide the student
10 publication with an office, preferably located at the school’s student center, and other
11 materials and equipment necessary for its operations.

12 *Sec. 6. Independence* – The student publication shall be autonomous from any
13 administrative intervention with regard to the handling of its funds, the content of the
14 articles the editorial board chooses to publish, the selection of its publication staff, and
15 members of the editorial board.

16 The operations of the student publications shall not be delayed, suspended or
17 closed down in connection with the articles they have published, or on the basis of
18 the conduct or performance of its staff without due process.

19 *Sec. 7. Special Program For Campus Journalism.* – The Commission on Higher
20 Education (CHED), Department of Education (DepEd) or the Technical Education and
21 Skills Development Authority (TESDA), as the case may be, is hereby mandated to
22 implement a Special Program for Campus Journalism in close coordination with
23 existing campus journalists and publication staff.

24 *Sec. 8. Funding of Student Publications* – Funding for the student publication
25 shall be sourced primarily from the student publication fees collected by the school
26 administration. It shall be mandatory for the school administration to collect student
27 publication/subscription fees during the enrollment period. The members of the
28 student publication can opt to collect the publication funds themselves upon their
29 initiative and under their full discretion and without administrative intervention.
30 Secondary sources of publication funds shall also include the savings of the respective
31 school’s appropriations.

1 For this purpose, the number of bonafide students enrolled for the current
2 semester or term shall be used as basis for the amount of publication funds that shall
3 be released by the school administrator who shall issue a list of the students enrolled
4 for the current semester or term to the editorial board.

5 *Sec. 9. Transmittal of Funds* – The school administration shall effect the
6 automatic release of the student subscription fees to the student publication within
7 fifteen (15) days after the last day of enrolment. The publication funds shall be
8 deposited through a trust fund or in the account of the student publication in an
9 authorized depository bank.

10 In no instance shall the CHED, TESDA, and DepEd, as the case may be, or the
11 school administration concerned, withhold the release of funds intended for the
12 student publication.

13 *Sec. 10. Publication Adviser* – The editorial board shall have the discretion
14 whether or not they would appoint a faculty adviser. In case the student publication
15 decides to appoint a faculty adviser, the editorial board shall have the power to choose
16 its faculty adviser, whose functions shall be limited merely to technical assistance.
17 Technical assistance of the faculty adviser shall mean any concern related to the
18 grammatical concerns, proofreading and the like.

19 *Sec. 11. Security of Tenure* – A member of the publication staff shall maintain
20 his or her status as student in order to retain membership in the publication staff. The
21 student journalist shall not be suspended, expelled or punished with administrative
22 sanctions solely on the basis of the articles he or she has written, except when such
23 articles constitute a violation of law, and the school's valid and reasonable rules and
24 regulations.

25 His or her performance as a student should not be used as basis for his or her
26 dismissal from the student publication.

27 *Sec. 12. Press Conferences and Training Seminars* – The CHED, TESDA, and
28 DepEd, in partnership with media and campus press organizations and alliances, shall
29 sponsor periodic competitions, press conferences and training seminars, in which
30 student editors/writers and teacher-adviser of student publications in the elementary,
31 secondary and tertiary levels shall participate. Such competitions, conferences and
32 seminars shall be held at the institutional, divisional, and regional levels, culminating

1 with the holding of the annual national elementary, secondary or tertiary School Press
2 Conference in places of historical and/or cultural interest in the country.

3 *Sec. 13. Powers and Functions of the Editorial Board* – The Editorial Board shall
4 have the power to select the staff members of the publication granted that the student
5 journalists the board selected were able to pass a qualifying examination.

6 The editorial board shall also be primarily accountable with regard the operation
7 of the student publication and the management of its funds. At the end of each
8 semester or term, as the case may be, the editorial board shall prepare a report on
9 the disbursement of funds subject to accounting and auditing rules. Such report shall
10 be posted at the school’s bulletin board or published in the school publication.

11 *Sec. 14. Printing of the Student Publication* – The printing of the student
12 publication shall be conducted by the editorial board and the student publication staff
13 through canvass or public bidding. For public schools, the student publication shall be
14 exempted from undergoing formal and bidding process under Republic Act No. 9184,
15 also known as the Procurement Reform Act, with regard to the selection of a printing
16 press and the purchase of equipment and materials necessary for its operations. The
17 editorial board shall freely choose the printing press it wants to avail the services of.

18 *Sec. 15. Power to Investigate* – The CHED, TESDA, and DepEd, as the case
19 may be, shall be granted the power to investigate any violation of this Act and its
20 implementing rules and regulations.

21 *Sec. 16. Administrative Sanctions* – The CHED, TESDA, and DepEd, as the case
22 may be, shall impose administrative sanctions for campus press freedom violations,
23 including, but not limited to, interrogation and intimidation of editors and staff
24 members and other forms of harassment by the school administration, faculty
25 members and the military, such as, but not limited to, sending of death threats, filing
26 of libel cases against student journalists, issuance of derogatory and libelous public
27 statements against student journalist; meddling of school administrators with editorial
28 policies; actual censorship of editorial content; withholding and non-collection of
29 publication fees; expulsion and suspension of student editors and writers without due
30 process; stopping or suspending the operations of the school publication such as, but
31 not limited to, the outright closure of the publication, locking of the publication office,
32 cutting the electricity and water supplies and other utilities of the office; non-

1 establishment of at least one (1) campus publication for every school; refusal to
2 reopen closed student publications.

3 *Sec. 17. Legal Assistance to Campus Journalists* – The CHED, TESDA, and
4 DepEd, as the case may be, shall provide legal assistance to student journalists in all
5 cases as herein cited.

6 *Sec. 18. Reportorial Requirements* – The CHED, TESDA, and DepEd shall submit
7 an annual report to both houses of Congress on the status of the implementation of
8 the law, including violations thereof and the disposition of pertinent cases.

9 *Sec. 19. Penalties* – Any person who shall wilfully interfere with, restrain or
10 coerce any student publication/student journalist in the exercise of their functions and
11 rights guaranteed by this act, or who shall in any other manner commit any act to
12 defeat any provision of this Act shall, upon conviction, be punished by a fine of not
13 less than P100,000.00 but not more than P200,000 or imprisonment of not less than
14 one (1) year but not more than five (5) years, or both at the discretion of the court.

15 If the offender is an educational institution or a juridical person, the penalty
16 shall be imposed upon the president, treasurer or secretary or any officer responsible
17 for the violation.

18 *Sec. 20. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)*. – The CHED, TESDA, and
19 DepEd, and in close consultation and coordination with student and campus press
20 organizations and other concerned sectors, shall promulgate within thirty (30) days
21 upon its approval, the rules and regulations necessary for the implementations of this
22 Act.

23 *Sec. 21. Separability Clause*. - If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or
24 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall
25 remain in full force and effect.

26 *Sec. 22. Repealing Clause*. – Republic Act No. 7079, entitled “*An Act Providing*
27 *for the Development and Promotion of Campus Journalism*” is hereby repealed.

28 All laws, presidential decrees or issuances, executive orders, letter of
29 instructions, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to, or inconsistent with
30 the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

1 Sec. 23. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
2 complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or at least two (2) newspapers of general
3 circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,